

served our Nation with distinction, but their service came at a great cost. Many developed health conditions due to radiation exposure, yet because they were not able to discuss the nature of their service, they were unable to seek medical care or disability compensation from the Department of Veterans Affairs for their illnesses." Decades after their service, in 1996, Congress repealed the Nuclear Radiation and Secrecy Agreement Act, which enabled Atomic Veterans to seek services and share their experiences. The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs provides information to connect Atomic Veterans with medical services and compensation. However, the National Association of Atomic Veterans, Inc., notes, "Currently, there are approximately 195,000 Atomic Veterans across America who either do not know their oath-of-secrecy has been rescinded, and who are not aware of the potential monetary benefits due them for (service connected) radiation induced illnesses."

While the best healthcare and other services in the world can never reverse what many Atomic Veterans and their families have endured, we owe it to America's servicemembers who have answered the call to duty to ensure access to high-quality services and resources to support their commitment to our country. As part of this effort, I cosponsored S.565, the Mark Takai Atomic Veterans Healthcare Parity Act, which would reclassify veterans who participated in the cleanup of the Enewetak Atoll as radiation-exposed veterans, making them eligible for the same benefits afforded to those covered by Radiation Exposure Compensation Act, RECA. Work also continues on bipartisan legislation to extend and expand RECA eligibility to those in Idaho and other States who have suffered from cancers related to fallout from nuclear weapons testing during the Cold War period of the 1950s and 1960s. As work continues on these and other efforts to support veterans, I join in honoring Atomic Veterans whose service has been a central part of our national defense. I hope recognition can also draw attention to available services and resources for Atomic Veterans.

In 1983, then-President Ronald Reagan urged fellow citizens to join him in appreciation of the service of Atomic Veterans he characterized as, "those patriotic Americans who through their participation in these tests helped lead the United States to the forefront of technology in defense of our great Nation and the freedoms we as Americans hold so dear."

Thank you, Mac McCormack, and your fellow Atomic Veterans, for your immeasurable and in many ways unrepayable service. I hope you know how deeply grateful we as a nation are for your patriotism.

TRIBUTE TO FATHER GEORGE POULOS

• Mr. BLUMENTHAL. Mr. President, today I rise to recognize the Very Reverend Father George Poulos, a deeply admired community leader, who turns 100 on September 30.

Born in Massachusetts to Greek immigrants in 1921, Father George joined the priesthood in 1943. He began his studies in Connecticut at the Holy Cross Seminary in Pomfret. Upon graduating in 1948 from the Holy Cross Seminary in Brookline, MA, Father George served as a pastor of the Holy Trinity Church in Norwich, CT. Then, in 1956, he was assigned to the Church of the Archangels in Stamford, CT. In 2009, after over six decades of remarkable service, Father George retired. He still plays an active role at the Church of the Archangels, serving as pastor emeritus.

I have been privileged to know Father George as a leader of courage and conviction, whose great work has touched countless lives. His vision and dedication enabled the Church of the Archangels to build an amazing, 11th Century Byzantine-style Greek Orthodox Church, which was consecrated in 1959. Later, in 1976, the church campus opened the Greek Cultural Center, which offered athletic amenities for church youth and banquet facilities for the entire community. In 1995, this center became the Stamford Athletic Club, providing invaluable services to the public.

Father George oversaw the creation of Ionian Village, a summer camp youth program in Greece. Since 1970, it has hosted thousands of Greek-American campers, giving them the opportunity to further explore their cultural history, religious roots, and language. Father George also established "Byzantine Fellowship" in America, and in his 30-year tenure as executive director, helped sponsor Greek cultural events in the United States and pilgrimages.

Father George's tireless dedication to helping others has earned him enormous respect and affection, as well as official recognition. He was appointed as vicar general of the churches in Connecticut by the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese, and in 2017, he received an honorary doctorate of divinity from Holy Cross Seminary. Father George is a prolific author and is actively involved in community service, as chaplain of the Stamford Fire Department, vice president of the local Council of Churches and Synagogues, and a major in the U.S. Air Force Civil Patrol.

I am honored to know Father George and his family for many years—indeed, decades. I can attest firsthand to his wonderful generosity and loyalty as a friend and his love for humanity, as well as the warm and welcoming spirit of his congregants. I hope my colleagues will join me in congratulating the Very Reverend Father George Poulos, his wife, Christine, their five sons, and their six grandchildren on this milestone of Father George's 100th birthday.●

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

RECOGNIZING THE WALT WHITMAN HIGH SCHOOL CLASS OF 1970

• Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Mr. President, on Saturday, October 9, 2021, nearly 200 members of the class of 1970 of Walt Whitman High School in Bethesda, MD, will hold their 50th class reunion, an event delayed a year by the COVID-19 pandemic. It is my pleasure to congratulate them on this special occasion.

This distinguished class of 1970 from Walt Whitman has an exemplary history of contributions to society and to advancing social justice. As children, a number of class members from the Bannockburn neighborhood in Bethesda joined a contingent from Howard University for the first multiracial civil rights protest in America, picketing segregated Glen Echo Amusement Park daily for 22 weeks in 1960 after Blacks were arrested for riding its carousel. As the result of these and other efforts, the policy was changed, and the park reopened to all the next year. And this year, those members of the class of 1970 will return to Glen Echo during their 50th reunion to ride that same carousel on its 100th anniversary.

The class of 1970 came of age at an important time in our Nation's history, a period of great change and dramatic events. When they were 8 years old in 1961, they saw President John F. Kennedy call for all citizens to commit to work for the common good. They saw the beginning of space exploration, the Cuban Missile Crisis, the arrival of the Beatles, the passage by the U.S. Congress of landmark bills on voting rights and fair housing, the Vietnam war, and the tragedies of the assassinations of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., and Senator Robert Kennedy.

This social awareness led to lifelong commitment and activism for so many in this remarkable class. In protest of the Vietnam war, many participated in the National Moratorium Against the War. In the dramatic March Against Death, dozens of members of the class carried the names of fallen soldiers whose families could not travel here to join the protest. As the first class of students subject to a draft lottery conducted by the Selective Service System, many classmates participated in efforts to abolish military conscription in the U.S. and in support of lowering the voting age from 21 to 18.

In 1970, when members of this class were in their senior year, WWHS was named the No. 1 public high school in the Nation by "U.S. News & World Report," which also recently named Whitman the best high school in Maryland. Whitman's first principal, Dr. Daryl Shaw, called the class of 1970 "the most challenging" he ever had, in light of their frequent questioning of authority and vigorous advocacy for social change. Profound events that changed